

May 24, 2002

Mr. Robert J. Semler
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
John F. Kennedy Federal Building - Room E-350
Boston, MA 02203

Dear Mr. Semler:

Enclosed is Connecticut's request for a waiver to postpone the implementation of the subsequent eligibility process for training providers as described in the Workforce Investment Act, Section 122, until July 1, 2003. This request would also extend the duration of the initial eligibility provider list.

The Connecticut Department of Labor has been working with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, local workforce investment boards, and other interested and affected parties. A committee of these groups has been working since last summer to develop a fair and equitable subsequent eligibility system that will provide program accountability, while also maximizing the utilization of consumer choice.

It is necessary to request this waiver so their work can be completed. The desired result is a system that allows us to effectively evaluate our providers on the employment and training program provider list.

Your timely approval of this waiver would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Shaun B. Cashman
Commissioner

Enclosure

State of Connecticut Waiver Plan

The Connecticut Department of Labor in consultation with the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission is requesting a waiver to postpone determination of subsequent eligibility until July 1, 2003. The reasons for this request are to allow the department sufficient time to develop the process and technical details necessary to have a quality review process. The waiver is written in the format identified in WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and Regulations 661.420(c).

A. Statutory Regulations to be Waived

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Section 122 (c)(5) and Regulations 663.530 dealing with the time limit for initial eligibility would be waived.

B. Goal to be Achieved as a Result of the Waiver

The goal is to increase the quality and quantity of the performance information (WIA and other) on training providers initially eligible and on the state list of eligible training providers. It will be accomplished by developing a collection process that thoroughly addresses technical issues that can impede our ability to collect performance information.

C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers

There are no state or local statutory regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver.

D. Description of Waiver Goal and Programmatic Outcomes

Connecticut is a small state with eight workforce development areas. During PY 2000 (July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000), approximately 1,400 Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) were issued. Currently, the state list of eligible training providers identifies 1128 training programs for 172 training providers as initially eligible. It includes 12 community colleges. The complete list can be found at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/cgi-bin/wiapub.pl.

Since the summer of 2001, the Department of Labor has been working with a technical workgroup of ETPL experts, which include staff from the Department of Labor, other state agencies, and the workforce investment areas. The workgroup meets for the purpose of improving upon the ETPL application process, providing technical assistance guidance to those involved in the system, and developing the policy and process to collect and then determine subsequent eligibility under WIA.

To date we have revised the application process for providers and introduced a rolling application procedure to make it easier to meet provider and customer needs. We will soon be releasing a guide to managing training, which answers many of the pertinent questions surrounding the training of WIA clients.

We are currently working on the subsequent eligibility process and measures. During the process of developing these products, we have encountered a number of technical issues that need to be resolved before a fair and equitable subsequent eligibility policy and process can be instituted. Those issues center primarily on the collection of all student data. Additionally, initial testing on the collection of the WIA performance data has shown that there are many providers with very few numbers of participants. This would make a review based upon the first year of data extremely difficult. The policy on subsequent eligibility that is under development will require minimum participant levels in each CIP (classification of instructional programs) area that will be evaluated. Therefore, an extension of an additional year of data will allow for a wider use of program data. It will also allow us to further develop the collection process and perform testing on the performance measures to be used.

It is our intent to perform the following activities over the next year:

1. finalize a data collection process and subsequent eligibility policy;
2. conduct training and/or workshops on the ETPL process;
3. test and refine the systems, and provide technical assistance as needed;
4. develop a complete technical assistance guide on Connecticut's ETPL process that would include at a minimum, applications, guidance on managing training, subsequent eligibility process and measures;
5. Connecticut is also in the process of implementing a new WIA Business System that will incorporate virtually all Labor Department data and functions. This system will provide for easier access and use of the ETPL system.

E. Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

The waivers will positively impact all customers, training providers, workforce investment boards, state ETPL practitioners, and ITA users.

F. Description of the Process to Monitor Progress

The Department of Labor, Quality Program Review staff will monitor progress made on the activities. Specific timeframes on those planned activities will be set up so that all are completed by July 1, 2003.

G. Description of the Process to Include Local Workforce Investment Board Comments on the Waiver Request

Local boards represented on ETPL Technical Workgroup.

H. Public Comment: Business and Organized Labor

The Public Comment Process will consist of the following:

1. Publication in the Hartford Courant of a Notice of Availability of the Waiver Plan for review by the General Public.
2. Review and comment by the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission.
3. Specific Labor review requested from Mr. John Olsen, who is a member of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission and is also President of Connecticut American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
4. Review and comment requested by all Connecticut Workforce Investment Area Directors. (This is in addition to board representation on the ETPL Technical Workgroup, who are developing this process.)

The requests for comments will be made simultaneously with submission of this request to the United States Department of Labor. Any comments received will be forwarded to you. Additionally, we may make revisions based upon the review of comments.